Mr. Les Payne
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Dear Les,

One of the last times we talked you told me you were not aware of my work on the JFK assassination. You then said you had to come down again. I'm sorry you've been too busy. I would like you to have an idea of what it is in particular- and about this I want nothing said publicly for several reasons - because I have a new book coming out. I do not know when. It is enormous, about a quarter of a million words or more. In manuscript, draft, really, and I'm sure it will be cut extensively. Dave Wrone retyped it on his computer. He can give you his evaluation of it. So can my local history prof friend. Gerald Mc Knight. He has read much but not all of it. Again because I should not be the one to announce it, in writing the president of Hood College, where all I have will be a free public archive, recommending that Lil and I be given honorary degrees, he said this book "should revolutionize thinking about the JFK assassination." In notifying me, the president said the trustees had voted for it "enthusiastically and unanimously." The award is not until August and the college has made no announcement of it.

Reading Tim Phelps' excellent "Capitol Games" I find in it, implicitly and I think solidly, what he to the point I've reached does not articulate and is explicit in all my work, that the all institutions failed. This is, in fact, the thrust of my assassinations work, showing with evidence, not a single conjecture, that in those times of great stress and ever since then all of society's institutions failed. In establishing this I've brought to light just about all that is factual about the JFK and King assassinations.

After Congress amended the FOIA investigatory files exemption in 1974 citing one of my earliest suits as requiring it - and with Teddy Kennedy personally seeing to it that the legistaive history is clear on it - when I was broke and in debt I began what I had to end (death), a series of FOIA lawsuits by means of which I have an archive that includes about a third of a million pages of once-secret government records. Most are the FBI's. Including my own work I'm talking about some 60 file cabinets and innumerable boxes of records. And before I could file the first of these suits I'd suffered the first of the venous thromboses that have been followed by a number of other serious medical problems and surgeries two of which I was not expected to survive.

But I'm 80, fragile and still active, even if I have trouble using the stairs to the basement where all these records are, the only place I have for htem.

Once when Dave phoned when McKnight was here and we were talking about the possibility of and the problems with getting this book published I'd said it will have problems because it is a tough book. Wrone said he wanted to amend that, and he said it is "unprecedented." I think he was speaking as the historian he is. I believe it is the most definitive work on any of our assassination, and it is thoroughly documented.

I'm sorry you know nothing about what I've done and faced because the first question you might have is why I have no agent and no publisher. It comes from the Wordsworthian curse of being the first and from the initial fear of all the many agents and publishers I approached with my first book. Six agents would not represent it, including one to whom I took a deal by the publication that sent me to him for him to handle it for me. ~~deal with it.~~ I got more than 100 international (more editorial) rejections for the book that without my doing it was runner-up for the mystery-writers award of 1966- and it is non-fiction! It is a book that remains the basic work in the field and about which I still get the most glowing praises from strangers. A book in which, controversial as it is, nobody has yet shown a factual error, even an insignificant one. After (seven) all my books, not a single person wrote or phoned to complain that I had treated him unfairly.

Despite feebleness and fragility - I hemorrhage subcontaneously with slight contact - and perhaps you'll think this is boasting but I do not intend it that way - I wrote this large draft, and it is nonfiction and documented, is less that six months. It blew Wrone's mind when I sent him 30,000 words some weeks. But this is a representation of my subject-matter knowledge. In one lawsuit the DJ's pretended answer to my charging the FBI with perjury, myself under oath to make me also subject to the penalities of perjury, was that I could undoubtedly make and prove such charges endlessly because I know more about the JFK assassination than anyone in the employ of the FBI.

The publisher is a small one and this book complicates his life. I have no reason to believe that he will make any real effort to promote and advertise it and I am not able to travel to do that myself. Any travel is a hazard for me. For that reason I've not driven out of Frederick since 1977. When I go to Johns Hopkins, which I've done rather frequently, the last time last week and the next day after tomorrow, I'm driven. And the trip alone tires me. I can't complicate the publisher's life even more and I do not intend to. I'm telling only one reporter other than you about it, George Lardner. We have known each other for 25 years.

Aside from the many significances I see in this book, I believe it does have news in it. Whether or not you can get here, which we'd like, I intend to ask the publisher to give you a copy when they distribute review copies, with whatever deadline they may affix. I cannot disclose any of the content on my own. I have to leave that up to them. But in confidence I tell you that it charges and proves one conspiracy and make a prima facie case out for another, both governmental, and documents them I think thoroughly.

The field has been pre-empted by the would-be Perry Masons but they are really commercializers and exploiters to whom fact is strange and they all theorize conspiracies without ever proving them. Tough competion and they have corrupted the public mind and protected the official miscreants.

Best to you all, Harold